

Week at a Glance

English Language Arts Teachers

What Students Will Do This Week

Setting and even plot are crucial to narrative writing, so this week has students looking at the connection between setting and plot as far as how a story is told. Students will then move through the week, looking at how narrative storytelling unfolds through a video, listening to and / or reading another story, as well as a professional writer's own personal narrative. All these narrative examples support the idea of how important setting can be in telling a story as well as how a narrative story focuses on one central idea--one snippet--from the writer's life.

What to Print, Copy, and Prepare

- ▶ Print the Video Handout and use with the short video located at https://www.youtube.com/embed/wsG2S_1PRnk PLUS the Setting Practice handout (Day 1)
- ▶ "Article, Activity, Exit Ticket" (all in one download!)... Uses the narrative article found online at <http://www.womenshealthmag.com/life/paula-lane> (Day 2)
- ▶ Two options for today's story: online text located at http://learn.susd12.org/pluginfile.php/216692/mod_resource/content/1/The_Elevator_by_Sleator.pdf or online read-aloud version located at <https://vimeo.com/84006862> PLUS the Writing Activity handout (Day 3)
- ▶ Personal Writing / Storytelling PLUS narrative example by Nancy Atwell located online at http://boyden8la.weebly.com/uploads/2/1/9/7/21975608/memoir_example_atwell.pdf (Day 4)
- ▶ In-class narrative essay writing assignment (Day 5)

DO LESS GRADING

For the in-class essay on day 5, you might consider a basic "completion" grade for this type of activity depending on your grading structure or grading plans, but not every single thing has to be graded. Nor should it be. You can't drown in student essays every single weekend. It's not sustainable. Plus, you can do something like this every once in a while and then after a few weeks, students can go back to those "timed" writing pieces and select the best one or their favorite one to re-write/revise on a more formal scale. This gives them more practice with writing while ensuring that YOU don't have more grading. Or, have students place timed writings in a folder that they add to over time, or that you have them refer to after teaching or re-teaching a grammar or mechanics lesson or other writing lesson. This way, instead of handing out a worksheet a few weeks from now to go over, say, using commas--You teach the concept and then have students practice by using their own writing and looking for ways to improve what they've already written.

Struggling Learners, Extension, & Differentiation

Play some instrumental music in the background as they write! This is a great activity for a Friday when things tend to get a little wild. There are times that a classroom can be loud with learning, and there are times when a classroom can be quiet with focused reflection. It's good to have some quiet time for students to write, think, write some more, and do a little mental problem-solving on their own. This activity also provides an opportunity for students to build up their "writer's notebooks" (or whatever you use in your classroom to store student writing). Writer's Notebooks can be used for all kinds of things throughout any writing unit because once those essays are written, they can be used and re-used for many other things (like the idea in the "Do Less Grading" section of this page. In real life, many professional writers have hundreds of "unfinished" and unpublished pieces that never see the light of day. And that's ok! It's about learning and growing. Not every single piece of writing is going to turn into a finished, polished product. To hold students accountable, perhaps each writing they do like this is 20 or 25 points so the goal is to get to 100 points (4-5 of these assignments that you simply record as a completion grade, never really reading them, but looking to see that they were simply done).